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ICLA MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Iowa Commission on Latino Affairs is to improve the quality of life of Iowa's Latino population through advocacy, education, legislative recommendations and action, public information and development of programs and services.

ICLA VISION STATEMENT

The Iowa Commission on Latino Affairs exists to promote the interests of Latino citizens in the State of Iowa and in doing this, fosters the well being of all Iowans.

In the spirit of justice, equality, inclusion and responsiveness this Commission, in partnership with the broader Iowa Latino community shall:

Educate itself and others regarding the needs of Iowa's Latino citizens and the issues which significantly impact them.

Inform Iowa's Latino communities, legislative branches of government and the general public of those needs and issues.

Advocate for positive changes in policy, practices and programs that potentially or actually negatively affect Iowa's Latinos.

Network and partner with organizations and individuals on behalf of Iowa's Latinos.

Part 1: Iowa Commission on Latino Affairs

The Iowa Commission on Latino Affairs (ICLA) is a state agency of the Department of Human Rights. It seeks to assure equity for Iowa's Latinos through advocacy, empowerment through information and education. ICLA promotes full participation of Latinos in the economic, political and social life of the State of Iowa. The Commission was established in 1974 and officially named the Iowa Commission on Latino Affairs in 1990 by the Iowa Legislature. ICLA is composed of nine citizen members from throughout the State of Iowa. They are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate.

1999-2001 ICLA Commission

John-Paul Chaisson, Chair, Iowa City, IA

Term expires June 30, 2001

Veronica Mendez, Co-chair, West Des Moines, IA

Term expires June 30, 2001

Paula A. Martinez, Carlisle, IA

Term expires June 30, 2001

Sally Faz-O'Donnell, Sioux City, IA

Term expires June 30, 2001

Rod Rodriguez, Storm Lake, IA

Term expires June 30, 2001

Mary Chavez-Muramatsu, Des Moines, IA

Term expires June 30, 2001

Edmundo Juan de Dios Cavazos, Muscatine, IA

Term expires June 30, 2001

Edward Cervantes, Bettendorf, IA

Term expires June 30, 2001

Rose Vasquez, ex-officio

Director, Department of Human Rights

Appointed February 1999

***Member Guadalupe Flores, Muscatine, resigned at end of 2000.**

ICLA COMMITTEES

Education: Mary Chavez-Muramatsu, John-Paul Chaisson,

Edmundo Juan de Dios Cavazos, Sally Faz-O'Donnell

Interpreters Training Program: Paula A. Martinez, John-Paul Chaisson

Immigration: Paula A. Martinez, Ed Cervantes, Veronica Mendez,

Rod Rodriguez

Legislation: Mary Chavez-Muramatsu, Ed Cervantes, Paula A. Martinez

ICLA Commission Meetings

ICLA meets 6 times a year. All meetings are accessible and open to the public.

Three meetings are among Latino Communities throughout the State,

Two are through ICN, usually during the winter and **One** is by phone conference.

ICLA STAFF MEMBERS

Administrator: Elizabeth Salinas Newby, Appointed by Governor Vilsack, September 17, 1999 and subsequently confirmed by the Iowa Senate

Administrative Assistant: Christine Taylor, hired December, 1999

Program Planner II: JoAnn Mackey, hired February, 2000.

Advanced Practicum Student: Amy Ostrander, University of Iowa School of Social Work

Part 2: Programs/Projects

ADVOCACY

Since the Commission on Latino Affairs conducted its hearings and outreach, we have been receiving anywhere from 5-10 calls daily from Iowa's Latino citizens regarding issues of employment problems, immigration concerns, concerns for their children's education, family needs, employment needs, housing needs, discrimination incidents, etc. ICLA has spoken on behalf of Latino citizens when asked to intervene ensure they receive the services and assistance and are heard justly. For example: there was a "hate crime" committed in the Latino community of Ackley, Iowa. Concerned Latino community leaders, to help address the situation calmly and appropriately contacted us. Contact was made with the city administrator and the police department and a town meeting was formed so Ackley Latinos and their community and Ackley community leaders could dialogue and try to resolve the matter. We had full cooperation from the police department and city administrator who welcomed our advocacy and intervention. We also networked with the Department of Civil Rights, Immigrants Network Project, and Latino leaders from the surrounding area. The **Outcome** of this advocacy intervention **resulted** in the Ackley police establishing communication with the Latino community, where none had existed previously. The Latino community was given a contact person for future concerns Latinos may have, and the same was extended to city leaders by the Latino community. We left both the Latino community and Ackley city leaders, with many resources. Recently a request came in from Ackley asking for cultural training for their police department. We gave them several names who could be of assistance and agreed to do it if others could not. This is one example of our Advocacy at work.

ICLA also works on legislative issues such as the English Only Bill, Racial Profiling Legislation and other pertinent legislation in conjunction with other organizations and agencies who are supporters or involved with similar issues.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Division of Latino Affairs communicates with Iowa's Latino population through our 'Latinos Across Iowa Newsletters', four times a year. The newsletter is designed to reach out to the Latino population and all Iowans interested in Latino concerns and issues. It contains articles of interest nationally and locally, a schedule of Latino meetings, events, programs and news around the State of Iowa. We also post the newsletters on our web site. Since our **statewide** hearings and outreach, our mailing list is almost 2000 and growing. Phone calls requesting information (15-20 calls, e-mails and mail daily) about Latinos in the State of Iowa. ICLA will also mail out, e-mail and post on our web site any alerts regarding pertinent information Iowa Latinos and Iowa Citizens need to know regarding immigration, services, programs, legislation, etc. ICLA is in touch with its constituency and works to connect them to organizations, programs, state government and general public. ICLA also briefs the Governor, the Lt. Governor and legislators on Latino issues in the State of Iowa upon request.

ICLA has directories and lists of Latino Services around Iowa, Spanish Speaking Attorneys, Immigration Attorneys, Service Providers, Immigration Services, Latino Owned Businesses and more. We have a healthy collection of resources pertaining to Latinos locally, state and nationally.

Statewide Hearings 2000

The Division of Latino Affairs' Administrator and Program Planner traveled to seven regions across the state of Iowa to conduct public hearings in October and November of this year. Attendance at the hearings varied from 10 to over 100 individuals, with the Latino community being widely represented at each hearing.

The hearing participants brought many questions, concerns, and suggestions to the hearings. Similar concerns were raised at every hearing and most often revolved around housing, education, health care, and law enforcement. The suggestions were widespread and numerous, demonstrating the overall willingness of communities to act as one vehicle of change.

Housing. Many Latinos live in substandard housing or have several families occupying one dwelling. These dwellings are not designed to hold this many occupants or in some circumstances, even be used for housing purposes. Many Latinos state the difficulty of finding adequate, affordable housing because many landlords will not rent to Latino families.

Education. The education concerns are many and have serious ramifications. Currently, the Hispanic drop-out rate is 78% in Polk County. This number is fairly constant across the State. The schools that were represented at the hearings cite a shortage of ESL teachers as a major concern. Traditional classroom do not recognize the contribution of Latinos nor do they take advantage of learning that occurs in discussion formats. Although some students receive ESL classes at school, parents do not typically have affordable ESL classes available to them.

Furthermore, the challenges Latino families and students face are not taken into consideration when determining disciplinary actions when a student misses too many classes. Latino students must miss school to handle translation issues for their parents, travel to Omaha to complete INS paperwork, are frequently sick more days because of the limited access to health care, and must miss school to care for ill siblings or younger siblings.

Few school-sponsored programs exist to ensure Latinos remain in school and have a vested interest in their education. Parents are typically misinformed or uninformed of their students progress or teachers' concerns. Notices are not sent home in Spanish and students are often used as translators in situations where they can manipulate the information for their benefit. Undocumented students do not feel the need to be in high school because they have no opportunity to attend college due to their undocumented status and inability to attain funding.

Health Care. Iowa officials are deeply aware of the lack of health care coverage in Iowa. To

alleviate some of the health care concerns, HAWK-I was developed. This program, however, does not cover undocumented children in Iowa. These children and their families are the poorest people in Iowa and the subgroup most in need. Children without access to health care miss more school, spread communicable diseases, and do not receive preventative medical care. Undocumented and documented adults also face a shortage of health care coverage. Many Latinos who work for meat-packing plants must wait six months before receiving health care benefits. These benefits typically are not extensive enough to cover the detrimental injuries suffered in meat-packing plants. Furthermore, pregnant women have been known to deliver their babies at home because they can not afford to go to a hospital and they are afraid of deportation. When this occurs, the newborn child does not receive a birth certificate or preventative care and the mother does not receive educational materials that may be beneficial or adequate health care.

Law enforcement. Immigration and Naturalization Service Enforcement officials team up with local police departments to conduct raids on companies. It has been stated by public hearing speakers that raids occur based on illegitimate charges which are later discarded. Such cooperation discourages understanding between the police and the Latino community. Furthermore, informants state racial profiling related to traffic stops is running rampant. Individuals, however, are afraid to document such incidences for fear of deportation or harassment. Others mention the inability to obtain a driver's license and therefore face repeated charges for driving without a driver's license or insurance.

Despite the multiple concerns which continue to face Latinos across the state and the nation, many suggestions were also discussed to meet needs at the community level.

Housing. Housing coalitions were discussed as a viable option to solve the housing crisis. Such coalitions would join together to ensure proper housing was available to Latino families. Such housing could be sponsored in part by employers as well as local community funding sources.

Education. Schools need to be informed that education can not be denied any student despite legal status. Mentoring programs in the school could give Latinos the ability to meet successful Latinos. ESL classes taught by senior citizens, retired teachers, and/or high school Spanish students could help adults learn the language. Class curriculum could encompass the contributions of Latinos. Classes could be taught in a discussion-based design rather than a lecture-based design. Bilingual GED instructors would benefit those working towards their GED. School counselors who work specifically with minorities could work to ensure minority students are taking challenging classes that will open job opportunities. Disciplinary actions could look at cases on an individual basis rather than through a protocol. Potlucks and social events can be used to involve Latino parents with the school system. A school-parent liaison can work with families stressing the importance of education. The school can provide an interpreter for parent-teacher conferences to ensure the correct message is being conveyed to parents. Leadership programs and extracurricular activities can be offered to Latino students.

Health Care. Free medical clinics separate from federal funding can be established to provide health care. Families can be made aware of public agencies which operate on a sliding fee scale.

Law Enforcement. Employees and companies can sponsor a van or car pool to solve transportation issues. This would alleviate the need for individuals to drive without a license. Before applying for a driver's license, individuals can make a copy of their paperwork and give these copies to the Department of Transportation officials. Emergency aid teams can be designed to ensure family members are alerted when a raid has occurred and can seek safety. Also, safety plans can be developed to decrease the impact of a raid on a family. In order to create and foster change, it was recommended that Latinos attend city council meetings, serve on state and local boards, vote, and become active in their community.

Outreach to 25 Counties

An outreach to twenty five counties throughout the state was made by the Program Planner and revealed some not so promising outcomes to the situation Iowa faces with the ever growing population of immigrants. It also revealed how the immigrant laborers have enriched our state and improved our quality of life by contributing to the industry growth of the meatpacking plants and poultry processing plants. Industry growth can be traced, in large part to increased worker productivity.

Low-wage immigrant laborers play a foundational role in our nation's economy. Many industries, particularly agricultural and service sectors, depend overwhelmingly on immigrant labor. The foreign born now constitute ten percent of our nation's population.

Across the nation they represent 34 percent of those working in "private households," 21.4 percent of those providing other "personal services," 18.5 percent of the workers in "eating and drinking places," and 12.8 percent of construction industry employees. In 1997-1998 a full 81 percent of farm workers were foreign born. Immigrants also dominate garment industry, meatpacking and poultry processing jobs. Nineteen percent of foreign-born workers perform "service occupations," another 19 percent work as "operators, fabricators, and laborers," and 4.7 percent work in "farming, forestry and fishing occupations."

In Iowa the numbers are uncertain, but substantial, because the new immigrant tends to keep a very low profile true numbers are not known. During the outreach to the different counties a series of interviews and meetings with meatpacking workers and poultry processing workers were held. The same issues seemed to be discussed over and over again. Lack of housing, health care, ESL teachers, and racial profiling were mentioned continuously. Another issue that was mentioned repeatedly was the unfair treatment they receive in their places of employment.

Housing is an issue that has to be addressed, and soon. People in small rural communities are living in terrible substandard conditions. Apartments and houses are housing several families. The dwellings that are being rented, and at times purchased should be condemned in most cases. Many Latinos are refused living quarters because they are Latinos.

In Postville, IA. a family of 21 living in a two bedroom apartment was interviewed. The elderly woman who was interviewed had recently become head of her family. During their voyage to the U.S. her husband passed away after having a heart attack. She told us that she would like to convey to people in their community that they came here to survive, and to get away from a situation in their country that was unavoidable. She said they meant no threat to anyone and would like to become active citizens in the community if they were given the chance.

Immigrants are a plus to our economy. Immigrants and their children bring long-term economic benefits to the United States as a whole. Immigrants add about \$10 billion each year to the U.S. economy. This estimate does not include the impact of immigrant-owned businesses or the impact of highly skilled immigrants on overall productivity. "National Academy of Sciences for the U.S. Commission of Immigration Reform."

Industry growth can be traced, in large part, to increased worker productivity, but the workers do not seem to reap the benefits of their work. Immigrant laborers report that "line" speeds have increased dramatically in recent years, and the data bears them out. Worker productivity, as measured by output per hour of work, nearly doubled in meatpacking and poultry processing

plants from 1967 to 1995.

Greater productivity has not, however, translated into higher wages. Average hourly earnings of workers in these industries have decreased. In 1980, meatpacking workers earned an average of \$10.24 an hour, and poultry production workers \$5.46 an hour. Throughout the years wages have fallen. In 1997, average hourly earnings were \$6.36 and \$5.34 respectively.

Beyond low wages, immigrant laborers in the poultry and meatpacking industries endure scandalous employment practices and working conditions. A 1997 survey by the OSHA and the DOL found that less than 40 percent of poultry processing plants complied with the FLSA, with most violations due to the failure to pay overtime or to keep accurate records of hours worked.

Repetitive stress or cumulative trauma injuries, such as carpal tunnel syndrome and tendonitis, occur because workers make the same “cut” and repeat the same range of limited motions thousands of times a day.

Iowa officials are deeply aware of the lack of health care coverage in Iowa. To alleviate some of the health care concerns, Hawk-I was developed. Unfortunately this program does not cover undocumented children. These children and families are the poorest people in Iowa and the subgroup most in need. Children without access to health care miss more school, spread communicable diseases, and do not receive preventative medical care.

Latinos who work for meatpacking plants must wait six months before receiving health care benefits. These benefits typically are not extensive enough to cover the detrimental injuries suffered in meat packing plants.

The working conditions in meatpacking and poultry processing plants lead to startling rates of injury and illness. In meatpacking plants, the use of knives, hooks, and saws in hot and cold areas on wet floors presents the risk of cuts, lacerations, and slips; and the work presents the risk of repetitive stress. In relatively modern meatpacking plants visited, a conveyor belt in a very loud and cold (38 degree) warehouse moved cuts of beef past tightly packed workers, who were each responsible for making the same cut or series of cuts all day long. Work in the poultry industry is similarly demanding repetitive, and often dangerous.

Stories abound of person forced to urinate in their uniforms, including pregnant women because they could not use the crowded rest rooms within the short breaks allotted, or could not secure permission to leave the production line.

In 1999, the Missouri Legislature formed a Joint Committee on Immigration in response to the perceived immigration problem. The House resolution, establishing the Committee, focused on the health, social service, educational, and law enforcement burdens created by immigrants. In statewide hearings, advocates sought to reframe the issue as one of unfair labor practices. They described laborers who worked in grueling jobs eight and ten hours a day, but could not afford housing and health care, the annual turnover rate of 75 percent in certain poultry processing plants; and immigrants who suffered work-related injuries that made them physically unable to continue work prior to becoming eligible for employer health insurance.

In December 1999, the Committee published its recommendations. The recommendations focused largely on the responsibility of corporations for their worker. The Committee noted that the state had “experienced an influx of ...immigrants due largely to its burgeoning meat-processing industry. It encouraged Missouri corporations to offer English-as-a-Second Language training for employees and their families, and state that “before a business can qualify for state tax credits, grants, or other related benefits, it should assist its employees in finding adequate health care. The Committee also recommended the formation of a multicultural center and program to serve as an “all-encompassing resource for immigrants” in Missouri.

Immigrants pay their way. By conservative estimates, immigrant households paid an estimated \$133 billion in direct taxes to federal, state and local governments in 1997. The typical immigrant and his or her descendants pay an estimated \$80,000 more in taxes than they will receive in local, state, and federal benefits over their lifetime.

STORIES CONVEYED TO THE OUTREACH COORDINATOR

Mr. M and Ms.A, both fled from their countries ravaged by civil war. Guatemala and El Salvador. Both moved to Perry, IA. Mr. M, a student activist in Guatemala, received asylum in the United States and subsequently, became a lawful permanent resident. Ms. A, applied for asylum, but soon lost track of her case.

Mr. M, is slight and frail, he was assigned to one of the plant's most physically "punishing" jobs, operating the O-shaped electrical knife called the "whizard," which is used to remove skin and fat. An anthropologist who worked in the plant in 1992 reported that Latinos disproportionately received the worst jobs. Mr. M worked for eight months, cutting literally thousands of pig carcasses each day. He generally worked from 6:50am to 4:20pm. The knife's vibrations caused him intense pain, particularly in his wrist, and his work came to haunt even his sleep. According to his sister, his head would swing back and forth in time with the knife's movements, as he slept. He would wake with locked fingers. The company reneged on its promises to provide medical treatment to Mr. M.

Worse than the physical trauma was the abusive treatment of his supervisors. This culminated one day when Mr. M, in his supervisor's absence went to the restroom without permission. On his return, the supervisor chastised him. Mr. M. argued that he could not possibly have asked for permission, and the supervisor gave him a formal warning. Mr. M referred to the constant pressure and abuse by his supervisors as the "worst part of a bad experience" and said that the incident made him feel "like a slave." IBP paid him \$9.90 an hour... good money, as he saw it. He ultimately quit, however, to preserve his health and dignity; he "wanted to be treated like a human being." He also knew that once he was physically "ruined" the company would kick him out, and "take another person." More than a year later, Mr. M still suffers pain in his arm from his work in the plant. He now works at a less stressful, but lower paying job.

Ms. A worked long and stressful hours in the frigid temperatures of the production line, making a cut every three seconds. Her pay topped out at \$8.65 an hour. She always worked over 40 hours a week and never received overtime pay. After three and a half years, Ms.A severely injured her back. This scared her because she knew that the company "threw out" people who could not work. A company doctor told her that she could continue to work. A company nurse, at one point, explained that the injury had resulted from her advance age. She tried less stressful work within the plant, but the pain persisted. She ultimately visited an independent doctor, who confirmed the severity of her injury and advised her that she could no longer perform work like meat cutting, cooking in a restaurant, or even caring for children.

These stories are not uncommon throughout the communities that have meatpacking plants and poultry processing plants. Jorge Ramos, Miami Herald, wrote that nothing has been done to solve the huge contradictions in the immigration laws.

He states, "Everyone, absolutely everyone, benefits from the work of undocumented immigrants in the United States. However, there's a great deal of hypocrisy in this country about the millions of immigrants who work here without papers. People criticize them but use them, denounce them publicly but exploit them in private, shout that they shouldn't be here but are unable to function without them."

ABOUT LATINO STATISTICS

The U.S. Census Bureau stated that Iowa's Latino population grew 89% between 1990 and 1999. In 1990 the Latino population in Iowa was 32,643, the 1999 Latino population in Iowa is 82,598 and

growing. This is a significant increase in proportion to the overall state population. The Latino people come to Iowa with hopes, dreams and contributions to share. New, untrained, uneducated immigrants do tend to cost a state more than they contribute. However, so do native-born, according to the National Immigration Forum. Both groups use more state and local services than they pay in state and local taxes. But overall, when federal taxes are considered, immigrants contribute more than they cost.

Immigrants who become U.S. Citizens typically outperform their native-born counterparts. Adult, foreign-born naturalized citizens have higher adjusted gross incomes than families with U.S. born citizens only, according to the National Immigration Forum.

Immigrants bring more that can not be calculated in dollars and cents. They are people who were motivated to leave the familiar behind for the sake of something better. They are the daring ones, the risk-takers. They bring with them hope, dreams, ambitions and vitality. They offer varied cultures, family values, old-fashioned work ethics and human ingenuity. They use those attributes to provide an enriched, vital and more deeply textured new Iowa.

Counts (1990) and Estimates (1999) of Iowa Residents of Hispanic Origin

The following Counties were visited by the Program Planner.

	<u>Counts</u>			<u>Estimates</u>	
	1990 Census Bureau Count	1990 K-12 Student Count	1999 K-12 Student Count	1999 Census Bureau Est	1999 Census Services Exper Est
Allamakee	42	12	33	88	156
Black Hawk	912	123	418	581	2756
Buena Vista	160	25	589	265	4468
Cerro Gordo	994	206	314	1703	1476
Clinton	294	61	107	501	499
Crawford 98	14	232	163	1615	
Dallas	176	25	461	413	3389
Des Moines	492	150	147	891	517
Dubuque 437	59	119	802	808	
Johnson	1435	193	391	2823	2653
Lee	732	166	161	1315	663
Linn	1591	296	499	3228	2573
Louisa	425	192	574	755	1399
Marshall 292	78	856	525	3455	
Muscatine	2900	947	1329	5156	4148
Polk	6161	964	2974	12663	17887
Pottawattamie	1514	259	537	2839	3040
Scott	4251	986	1310	8143	4738
Sioux	66	16	169	154	712
Story	840	130	174	1453	984
Tama	128	31	178	218	601
Wapello	224	10	130	394	1300
Washington	196	33	136	391	983
Webster	490	78	164	852	1057
Woodbury	2712	541	2197	4910	9931

During the outreach it became quite obvious that there are phantom communities that exist not only in the rural areas but in the larger communities. A report put out by Sandra Charvat Burke, Iowa State University better states what the true counts in Iowa may be.

The U.S. Bureau of the Census counted 32,643 persons of Hispanic origin in the state in 1990 (Table 1). A majority of the counties (64) had fewer than 100 Hispanics, although Muscatine, Polk, Scott and Woodbury each reported more than 2,500.

Since the 1990 census, the bureau has produced annual estimates of the population of Hispanic origin. The most recent estimate suggested that 61,570 Hispanics lived in Iowa in 1999, an increase of 28,927 (+88.6%) since the 1990 count. About 2.1 percent of all Iowa residents were of Hispanic origin in 1999, an increase from the 1.2 percent noted in 1990. Half (50.1%) of the Hispanic residents were estimated to live in Muscatine, Polk, Scott, or Woodbury counties that year according to the estimates produced by the census bureau, which was slightly higher than the percentage these four accounted for in 1990 (49.1%).

The 1999 figures provided by the U.S. Bureau of the Census may underestimate the Hispanic population in Iowa. Evidence for this comes from examining the number of Hispanic youth as reported in school-enrollment figures. For example, Buena Vista County had 589 Hispanic Students enrolled in school in 1999 but the estimate from the census bureau suggested that the total Hispanic population was 265 that year (Table 1). Similarly, 856 Hispanic students were counted in Marshall but the total population of Hispanics was estimated by the bureau to be 525. In Clarke, Crawford, Dallas, Emmet, and Sioux counties as well, more Hispanic students were noted than the bureau's estimates of the total Hispanic population. Clearly, the estimates of Hispanics offered by the census bureau were not accounting even for school-age Hispanics let alone their parents, younger siblings, or other adults who would be present in the total population. These comparisons indicate that relatively rapid change in the Hispanic population is not always captured by the U.S. Bureau of the Census in its estimation procedure.

Using the 1990 census counts of the Hispanic population, an average of the 1989 through 1991 K-12 enrollment of Hispanic youth, and the 1999 Hispanic K-12 figures, and experimental estimation procedure was devised to construct another set of estimates of the total Hispanic population for 1999. This experimental set yields a substantially higher statewide total of Hispanics (82,598) that year than did the bureau's formula (Table 1); indeed, the experimental figures suggest that the Hispanic population in Iowa more than doubled (+153.0%) since 1990. Counties that recorded relatively large increases in Hispanic students between 1990 and 1999 also have large gains in total Hispanics in the experimental numbers. Muscatine, Polk, Scott and Woodbury continue to have large totals in the experimental estimates, accounting for 44.4 percent of all Hispanics in 1999. That percentage is a few points lower than that for the census count or estimate. The difference is caused by rapid gains among Hispanics in counties such as Buena Vista, Dallas, and Marshall that result when the experimental set of estimates is constructed.

Both the estimates from the U.S. Bureau of the Census and from the experimental set should be used with caution. While the experimental set may better reflect recent localized changes in the Hispanic population, it, too, is at best an estimate.

Sandra Charvat Burke
Iowa State University

Prepared with support from the Iowa Agriculture and Home Economics Experiment Station and ISU Extension

INTERPRETERS' TRAINING PROJECT

The Iowa Commission on Latino Affairs was awarded additional funding (\$10,000) to do a Nationwide analysis of current policy regarding the use and need of translators and interpreters in the following areas: the legal system, the medical communities, social service institutions and public education. ICLA called for proposals and received several. The Commission selected the University of Northern Iowa to conduct the analysis. The following is a brief report of the results and what is being done to move forward with the recommendations from the study conducted.

In the past decade Iowa has experienced a significant increase of immigrants from other countries, the majority coming from the Latino Countries. This trend has increased the demand for competent foreign language interpreters in Iowa's courts, medical communities and social services. In the courts for example, Judges, lawyers and court workers documented examples of cases where quality interpreting cost an individual his/her freedom and extreme hardship when pleas were entered that were not understood or explained to the individual in his/her language. An example of one case: One judge witnessed a Latino client who answered everything with "yes" because he was very frightened and thought that is what he was suppose agree with the judge on a misdemeanor charge. The Iowa Court System conducted a survey of Iowa Judges and Magistrates; it documents the significant increase in the need of quality and qualified court language interpreters and translators. A copy of this survey is available at the ICLA office. The medical profession has its own nightmare stories. One case mentioned was the amputation of a non-English speaking client's wrong foot, of taking medications inappropriately because they did not understand the instructions. There are many more such documented cases. A survey was also conducted about the important needs for quality and qualified medical translators and interpreters. Social Services stated available and needed services for which non-English speaking clients were qualified to have were not being utilized due to lack of information to the clients because of language deficits. Of course, education is a major focus for the non-English speaking students as they struggle to learn the language and culture with very, very large classes and few ESL teachers. In the Latino Community, the high school dropout rate is the highest due to many barriers, chief among them, language deficiency. ICLA is pushing to address these barriers for their Latino Youth with the department of education and the school systems.

The **outcome of the study is**, to develop a credible interpreters' training program. This is now being done in collaboration with the Federal Bureau of Refugees, the courts, medical entities, social services and education. A model for the training of each area is being sought and developed. The first training will be in February 2001, and it will be medical interpreting. For more information about this program, please contact ICLA. The additional monies requested by ICLA for the 2001 budget is to bring our share of resources for the training of Spanish translators and interpreters, the most needed language, which our partners are assigning to ICLA to be responsible for as a part of the collaborative group involved in the development of the interpreters and translators project. The bottom line value of this ICLA program is: saving of taxpayers money for the wrongly prosecuted; the cost of family social needs when the head of the household is jailed; assured due process in the courts; averting medical mistakes and lawsuits.

IMMIGRATION INFORMATION

A major role the Iowa Commission on Latino Affairs is to provide accurate and up-to-date information to Iowa's Latinos, general public, legislature and the Governor and also provide immigration resources to assist anyone who calls for the latest immigration information. ICLA has a massive resource library on immigration issues locally and nationally. Also, two ICLA staff have had the INS training course to be of service to our constituency and our state. ICLA has partnerships with all Iowa organizations that deal with immigration issues and assist in doing outreach and training when called upon by businesses, schools, Latino communities, Iowa communities, etc.

LATINOS AND EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

ICLA has conducted hearings and outreach to determine the status of education among Iowa's Latino community. The main Latino issues being addressed by this Commission are:

- Educational barriers, such as racial profiling of Latino students in their school parking lots. Latino students being abused harassed, taunted with racial slurs and language in school in front of staff and by staff.

- The high dropout rate of Latino Students.

- Unfair disciplinary policies used on Latino Students due to extenuating circumstances of the Latino Family.

- The need and desire for Latino parents to have more contact with the schools.

- The need for better communication between Latino parents and schools.

- The need for public schools to be better culturally trained and informed regarding national laws which apply and protect undocumented Latino children.

- The need for more ESL teachers and programs with a smaller ratio of student to teacher. Ratio at this time is about 53 to 1.

ICLA is addressing these concerns through networking with the school systems and the parents; facilitate focus groups among Latinos and school staff, by providing cultural training, and educating the Latino Communities about their part in the success of their children in school through town meetings between school officials and Latino parents.

CULTURAL TRAINING

Besides Immigration training, cultural training is a major request which comes into our ICLA office. ICLA has a list of credible and able trainers that is given to all who request this service. However, lately, several companies have called ICLA for their cultural training programs. The reason given is that we do applied cultural training, dual training (both Latino culture and American Culture), we are accessible as a resource when companies have concerns or issues with their Latino employees, plus we do follow-up visits, the best part for them is cost. We provide good training at a minimal cost and they are glad to support ICLA. Some companies have stated that when they have spoken with other training agencies, they are more limited in their focus and don't often listen to what the companies are asking for in their training.

JOINT PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

ICLA has partnered with the Department of Human Services, Department of Public Health, Education, Iowa Workforce Development, Federal Bureau of Refugees, Law Enforcement, the Courts, and many other organizations to help each other reach out to the Latino Communities. Outreach is provided through team training, conferences, seminars, etc. A major example of this is the Interpreters' Program. Law Enforcement is joining us to study the feasibility of providing Iowa driver's licenses to all immigrants, focusing on the safety as well as economic aspect (Having safe and insured drivers on Iowa roads). ICLA is also partnered with Immigrant Rights Project, the United Methodist Church, Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Abuse, American Friends Service Committee and immigration lawyers to provide assistance to immigrants dealing with immigration issues. ICLA also has a respectful relationship with the INS.

PART 3: EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES OF ICLA

LATINO LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

ICLA was a major sponsor of this conference along with the University of Iowa, School of Social Work. It was a conference, which centered on the subject of "Strengthening Latino Families". Workshops addressed various topical areas such as timely and best practices to work with and help Latino Immigrants and their chosen communities transition in all areas of settling into a community. One full day was devoted to Latino Youth.

Leadership Awards were presented to folks who had made a difference in their communities and who promoted and practiced goodwill, and positive outreach and communication in both the Latino and non-Latino communities. The recipients were from Storm Lake, Dubuque, Ottumwa and Postville. Over 600 hundred attended the event at which Lt. Governor Sally Pederson delivered the keynote address.

Pan American Day was celebrated with the Governor signing the Pan American Day Proclamation as well as socializing at the Capitol with the Governor, guests and friends from Panama and other Latino Countries.

ICLA staff traveled around the state delivering keynote addresses, some with the Lt. Governor and participating in several Hispanic Heritage Month Events.

PART 4

Future Projects

ICLA is in the process of researching grants and programs geared to Latino Youth. It is planning to develop a Latino Youth Alliance—to focus on Latino Youth needs and to connect all Iowa Latino Youth to encourage support for each other, promote higher education, testing, SAT tests, etc.

ICLA is studying the development of a Latino Job Page on our Web Site. It is being carefully studied and designed to enhance existing Job sites, in collaboration rather than duplicating efforts already being done.